JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

VERA M. MARTIN

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Nov 4 1976 (date)	Nov. 4, 1976 (date)

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INTERVIEWEE: Mrs. Vera Martin

INTERVIEWER: Steve Garrett

INTERVIEWER: This is an interview with Mrs. Vera Martin for the Joliet Junior College Oral History Project by Steve Garrett at Mrs. Martin's home in Joliet, Illinois, on November 4, 1976, at 8:00 p.m.

GARRETT: Mrs. Martin, I understand that you came from Goodings Grove. Could you tell me a little background about Goodings Grove?

MARTIN: Well, Goodings Grove was one of the early settlements in Homer Township, in the northwest corner of that township. It was named after the Goodings family that came there in 1832. James Gooding, his wife, and three sons, James, William, and Jasper came from Bristol-Ontario County, New York, and settled in this community in 1832. It was then a part of Cook County, and James Gooding went back to Ohio and New York many times where his relatives lived and he encouraged people from Ontario and Medina Counties, Ohio,to come to Illinois; and many did. And by the next six years he had encouraged many families to come to Illinois, to the area that he was living in. One of them was my great-great uncle, Ira Austin, and he came to the area in 1838. This area . . . when Ira Austin came to the community, it was very much a wilderness; but it was a good farming area, so he bought property at the Goodings Grove Corner right across the road from the Goodings. He built his cabin a half mile north of the corner instead of right at the corner as the Goodings had done. There he started his farming, and breaking ground in a virgin prairie is rather a hard job; but with the help of his nephew, James B.

Austin,who had come with him, they broke ground. But they had many problems that they had to think of even before breaking ground, because when they left Ontario, they had started out equipped to drive through from Ontario to Will County, but Ira had a sister Sally living in Medina County, Ohio, and they stopped there for a few days' rest. They had an old mother pig in their wagon; and when they were at Sally's, the mother pig had her family of little pigs. /Laughter/ So they finally decided that they would have to stay for ten days or two weeks until the little pigs could travel, and so they did. Then they came on to Illinois. I really don't know if the pigs were all alive when they arrived here, but anyway the human beings were all okay. Well, as I said, Ira built his cabin a half mile north of the Goodings Grove corner. It was a log cabin, which was about the only kind of a building that they could build in those days. A few years later,when sawmills had been opened up and things of that sort, they could get lumber; but at that time they had to almost just live in a log cabin, which they could build of logs from the property that they had just purchased. When they came, the very first thing they had to do was to find food for all the stock that they had brought with them--especially this mother pig with her ten little pigs. In order to feed stock in those early days, they had to, at first, depend upon vegetables -- something that they could raise in a hurry, as potatoes and turnips, such things as that. In 1841 Ira's father, Levi Austin, who lived in Ohio at that time, had planned to come to visit Ira and maybe help him for a few months; but instead of a few months, he stayed four years because he was really needed here. When great-great Grandpa Levi Austin was here, it was his job every day to dig some potatoes and boil them and get them ready to feed to the stock. Levi kept a diary, and I have some of the diary that he kept in 1841 here in Will County. Every

day, he said, "I biled potatoes to feed the pigs." /Laughter/ And that's the way he started his diary almost every day. He told the weather and then he said, "Today I biled some potatoes for the pigs." One of the very first areas that Ira and Jimmy were able to get ready for raising a harvest was twenty acres that he put into buckwheat and then another twenty acres that he put into corn. And then also he raised oats. So within a few years they were ready to really get into the farming business because he had enough land plowed and ready to use for a farm. But I think getting any mail was one of the most important,treasurable things for the people living in the community. Whenever anyone came from Ohio, or from Ontario to Illinois, they brought mail to every one. When anyone went back to Ohio or to Ontario, they took mail back from everyone; and I know that when Levi was living here, it seemed like he was forever looking for mail from the family back home. I have a letter that Levi received from one of his daughters and the outside (there was no envelope) was just an extra sheet of paper and it said: "To Levi Austin, Des Plaines, Cook County, Illinois." Then up in the corner was "25¢" written in pencil and showing that that was what he would have to pay for the letter when it came into this improvised post office called Des Plaines. Now I believe that that was about where the Sag is at the present time, because that was directly north of Goodings Grove in along the area where the I & M Canal was being built at that time. And, of course, the Goodings were connected with the canal; my grandfather was also -- at first in the northern area -- then later in Lockport. Mr. William Goodings became the first engineer for the I & M Canal, and being a neighbor and a very close friend of the Austins, they became interested in the canal also; and when Jimmy was not working on the farm, he helped in the building of the canal.

He was one of the first captains of a canal boat when it was opened in 1848. Many more settlers came into the area. And. . . Oh, I wanted to say here that there was no post office, of course, closer than the Des Plaines Post Office or the one at Lockport, but then a few years later there was a post office opened at Goodings Grove in Crisler's Store. By that time they had Parrish's Store, Crisler's Store, the creamery, and the blacksmith shop, all at Goodings Grove corner. One time a young Methodist minister at the Goodings Grove church became well acquainted with all the youngsters in the neighborhood. They always liked to go to the store, and so the minister one day lined all the kids up at the edge of the stoop at Parrish's Store and taught them how to pucker up their mouths so they could whistle. They had lots of fun about it, and Goodings Grove became known as Puckerville because the minister taught the kids to pucker up their mouths and whistle. And as more and more settlers came into the community -- there was the Mitchells, the McGregors, the Blounts, the Ludwigs, the Ulriches and many, many more -- it became a larger community.

GARRETT: You said that -- well, okay, you went from the post office right to all these stores being developed in Goodings Grove. When was that done -- in about 1850?

MARTIN: Well, I don't know exactly. I know the school was built in the '50's; and the blacksmith shop may, of course, have been there in the '60's, but the people that were in the blacksmith shop and in these different places that I knew, were from a little later era, a later time than the 1860's, of course. The Parrishes, I had met them when they still were in the store. It was in the 1900's that I used to go out to the area to visit my grandparents; the Austins were still living in Goodings

Grove at that time. The Mitchells had gone to Chicago, but the McGregors were still in that area, so those are the families that I used to visit when I was a child. I was born in Goodings Grove in 1897 at the Mitchell farm. My father had been operating the thresh machine in the Homer Township area, and he threshed for many families -- all around that area and even as far as Lemont and into DuPage County. And then we left the farm in 1903 and went to Lemont. Then from Lemont we moved to North Dakota in 1910. We lived in North Dakota just one year; then we came back to Joliet, and I've lived in Joliet ever since.

GARRETT: So that school, the first school, was in Goodings Grove?

MARTIN: The first school in Goodings Grove was built in the 1850's, and my parents and all my aunts and all my uncles attended that school. Both grandfathers were directors of the school, and my brother attended that school, but I was too young when we lived in the Goodings Grove area to go to school yet. And then when I went back to Goodings Grove to teach school in 1917, I had to teach three months in the old school because the new school had not been finished. It was supposed to be (finished) when that term opened. Of course, at the time I didn't think it was very nice to have to teach in the old school, but afterwards I realized how lucky I was, what an opportunity it was for me, to teach in the school that my parents and all of our family had attended before. So I was glad I did have that opportunity.

GARRETT: What was the building like?

MARTIN: The old school?

GARRETT: Yes.

MARTIN: It was quite a large building because Goodings Grove always had had quite a large attendance. Many times I think they could have had two teachers in the school instead of just one, but they didn't. Oh, I think in the old school they could have accommodated 50 children. We had 35 children the first year, in the new school, from first through eighth grade, and it was quite a challenge but everything worked out fine.

GARRETT: Was the new school building a lot bigger than the old one?

MARTIN: No, it wasn't. It wasn't any bigger. It wasn't as big, I don't believe, as the old school. But, of course, it was more modern and one of the boys -- one of my pupils, Walter Haley -- was the janitor. I lived with my Grandmother Austin who then lived across the street from the school.

GARRETT: How did the kids react to school, you know, when you were a teacher?

MARTIN: Well, I think a lot better than they do now. /Laughter/ I think I would hate to try to teach school now. I think discipline was different in those days. I don't think young folks, children, have to, or even think of, trying to be quiet and do their studying quietly as the children did in years ago. I think it's just a change, a difference in time, because I still teach Sunday School and still work in the church, and the noise of classwork sometimes bothers me because I'm not used to that.

GARRETT: Where exactly. . .?

MARTIN: You wanted to know about the creamery?

GARRETT: Yes. And the locations of all the buildings.

MARTIN: Well, I'll draw a little map so that you can see the locations, how they were. Now the creamery was right across the street to the east of Parrish's Store, the east side of Bell Road. You know Bell Road went north and south, and it was a very busy place every morning. The farmers would come in with many cans of milk and would unload them there. The milk would be pasturized. Now I don't know -- maybe I shouldn't say pasturized. Anyway there were cream separators. They separated the milk. They made cheese and butter. Of course, then the farmers could stay. They could go to the store and come back after a while and get some skim milk to take home for feeding their pigs. And it would take nearly all morning to process the milk and to make butter there every day. It was, really, a very busy place, and it made the community seem like a very busy community at that time. Of course, the blacksmith shop was just across the corner from the creamery and many men would bring their horses and have things fixed at the blacksmith shop so the blacksmith shop was always a very important, busy place. After the post office was closed in 1908, then Crisler's gave up the store. It became the Modern Woodman Building and they built a large hall in connection with the old store and it was used as a dance hall in 1918 when I taught at Goodings Grove. The school was east of the hall facing the Orland Road.

GARRETT: Okay, where were the stores then and the post office in relation to the blacksmith shop and the creamery?

MARTIN: Parrish's Store was directly across the street to the north of

the blacksmith shop and Crisler's Store was north of the creamery.

GARRETT: Oh, I see -- so that they were all right on Bell Road then?

MARTIN: Yes.

GARRETT: And Goodings Grove was divided by what street?

MARTIN: Bell Road, and 143rd Street now. Of course, 143rd Street then, we just called it the Orland Road because four miles east of Goodings Grove was Orland Park. After the Methodist Church had closed in 1916, most of the people that were connected with that church went to Orland's Methodist Church.

GARRETT: When was that first church established, do you know? Was that Methodist Church the only church in town, or . . .?

MARTIN: It was the only one right in Goodings Grove. Well's Corner Church was about five or six miles away. There were churches at Hadley, and Marley, but there was just the one at Goodings Grove. Well, there was a Catholic Church, also, near Goodings Grove a little bit farther east called St. Michael's Church. The Methodist Church, I think, was built in about the 1880's because my Grandfather Mitchell was one of the Sunday School teachers of an adult class there in 1890. Both my parents were members of the class, and shortly after that my parents were married. Later my Grandmother Austin was superintendent of the Sunday School for many years.

GARRETT: What was the building like?

MARTIN: The Methodist Church?

GARRETT: Yes. Was it a big church?

MARTIN: Just a white building, just a little, oblong, white building with a little steeple on it, and most all the Protestant churches of that time were just small, generally buildings painted white -- no stained glass windows or anything of that sort. /Laughter/ It was just a plain, little building, but we enjoyed the many years in that little church and the old school just across the street from the Methodist Church.

GARRETT: So, where was the church. . .?

MARTIN: The church was almost a half-mile west of Goodings Grove. And in between there was Ulrich's Cider Mill, on the same side of the street as the store and the school. And there farmers would bring apples to be made into cider, and that was quite a busy place, too, in the fall.

GARRETT: Did the creamery just serve Goodings Grove, or did they serve surrounding areas?

MARTIN: Well, quite a large surrounding area, yes, because even the people down as far as the Well's Corner Church,which was five, six, miles away, brought their milk to the creamery. When that closed, milk was picked up at the farm homes and trucked to Orland Park and then it was sent to Chicago by train. So that was how. . . because as the change came, and finally, oh, by 1918, when I taught school out there, most of all these different things had closed. There was one store yet. Mrs. Kesser ran the store that formerly was Parrish's Store. My Grandmother Austin was a busy woman and liked to travel and she had sons in Montana at that time.

She liked to go to Montana to visit them, so when I was teaching out there when she was gone, I stayed at Kesser's Store with Mrs. Kesser and her family.

GARRETT: What was your house like?

MARTIN: Where I was born.

GARRETT: Yes.

MARTIN: Well, the Mitchell home was a very lovely home. I was always very proud of my birthplace. I'll have to show you a picture of it. It was quite a large house and my grandfather built it shortly after he and Martha Van Horne were married. My mother was born there and I was born in the same room that she was. /Laughter/ Cause we were living on the farm when I was born. My father was running the threshing machine, but he farmed when he wasn't away with the thresh machine.

GARRETT: Was it a big house, like a typical farm house?

MARTIN: Yes. It had four big rooms downstairs and three rooms upstairs. It was quite a large home. And the Austin farm had a large home, too, where my father was born. That was a nice, large home. After the Austins moved up to the Goodings Grove corner from the farm, Nick Welter bought the farm in 1903; and now Barney Welter lives on that farm. When Grandpa bought his property half a mile south of Goodings Grove, he built his house and the barn, and the barn is still standing to this day. It had walnut beams, and it was built so solidly that Barney Welter is still using that barn in 1976!

GARRETT: Wow! Were things different then -- I mean, what did you eat --

was it just like today -- eggs for breakfast?

MARTIN: Oh, yes. I think very much. I think we lived very much in those days like we do now. As far as. . .

GARRETT: For instance, when you were six years old, can you remember how your life was?

MARTIN: Yes, I can remember way back then.

GARRETT: Well, like, what was a typical day -- I mean, what did you do for fun with the other kids, or . . .?

MARTIN: Well, I started to school, of course, when I was six years old, out in the country. And one of the things that I remember so vividly was one day my brother and I and a neighbor girl were walking home from school and some Gypsies' wagons -- we could see them coming towards us from a distance /Laughter/ -- and, of course, we were scared to death. So we started out across a plowed field and had to cross a creek, and I guess with my brother on one side and Viola Weber on the other, and I don't think my feet hit any of the stepping-stones as we crossed that creek. Of course, then, when we got home, my mother was worried because the Gypsies had stopped at our house and wanted food, and my mother said that she didn't have any food to give them, because she was afraid to even let them in the yard. The dog kept barking at them. My mother said, "I'm just baking bread now." "We'll take the dough," the Gypsy woman said. Mother said, "No, I think I'll bake the dough myself." And then she wanted baby clothes. We had a baby sister born just shortly before that, and the clothes were on the line, so they wanted baby clothes then and Mother said, "Why, no, I have no baby clothes to give

away. I have a baby that needs the clothes herself." And they were the Gypsies that we met a little farther up the road. But that was one of the things that we were a little bit afraid of, was Gypsies.

GARRETT: What kind of games did you play when you were younger? A lot different probably than they are today?

MARTIN Well, we didn't have anywhere near the amount of bought toys as now -- we had toys that were improvised -- of course, when I was six years old, I remember that Christmas I got a beautiful doll and a doll buggy. We did have those kinds of things. But one of the things that -- in those days -- that Christmas was very special for, was to get an orange. We saw very few oranges in those days, and, of course, that was one of the special things that my folks always saw that we had for Christmas, was an orange for each one of us to have in our stockings. We all hung up our stockings, of course, you know, and those were the things that were very important for us to have for Christmas.

GARRETT: Okay, that's how your life was back when you were younger. How did things change as you grew up around the area?

MARTIN: Well, we moved to Lemont and I went to a city school in the big public school in Lemont. We went to the Methodist Church in Lemont. Then in 1910 we moved to North Dakota. My father decided he . . . well, we lived in the power house at Lemont and Dad had been operating the substation for the Joliet Electric Railway Company and I guess he began to think he was a farmer, so we went to North Dakota. The climate out there did not agree with him; he had rheumatism badly after we moved out there, and the crops failed. We had a cyclone; we got caught in a flood and there was just so many things happened. Christmas Day we left

to come back to Joliet. We came back and I started to school again in Joliet on February the 14th. That was in 1911. From then on I just grew up in Joliet and then began teaching school. I took the teacher's examination when I graduated from high school, and I passed it and began teaching school. I finished high school in January so took courses at the (Joliet) Junior College -- also took three courses at JJC during summers and a course at DeKalb Teacher's College.

GARRETT: Back to Goodings Grove -- where was the closest train station?

MARTIN: Lemont. Six miles from Goodings Grove in Cook County was Lemont, and that was the closest. Many times when I was teaching out there, that's where they met me. One night (going back to Goodings Grove) John Kesser had met me in Lemont, and the snow was so deep, we tipped over twice /Laughter/ in the cutter before we got back to Kesser's Store in Goodings Grove.

GARRETT: Did people have to go to Lemont or Lockport for clothes or anything?

MARTIN: Yes, Joliet. Of course, by the time I was teaching out there, people had cars. In 1918 most everybody had a car by that time. But even way back, in early days, we went to Joliet, Lockport and Lemont -- even Chicago many times. Generally about once a year my folks would go to Chicago at least to buy Christmas presents and such things like that.

GARRETT: So Goodings Grove would be considered a farming area?

MARTIN: Oh, yes, it still is a farming area. Of course, now especially down around the Reed School area, many people moved into that area from

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Chicago. Because of the crowded conditions in Chicago they wanted to get away from the city. And Reed School has become quite a large school at the present time. Now the Goodings Grove School has consolidated with the rest of Homer Township, and it is a consolidated school area.

GARRETT: Do you know anything about the invention of the steel plow?

MARTIN: Not a great deal. Of course, I heard about it through the Historical Society and my folks did know John Lane and I know relatives of John Lane; and, of course, he did invent, I believe, the first, at least the first plow that was used in Will County -- maybe the first plow used in Illinois -- I don't know. The family didn't take care of any of the patent rights right away, so there is discussion about that. I really do feel that John Lane should get more credit for building this plow than maybe he is given in the State of Illinois because John Deere about the same time invented a plow, also, and, of course, being a big company, or becoming a big company, they saw to it that their plow was patented -- and maybe before John Lane's was -- I can't be too sure about that part of it because I've never gone into that deeply enough to really know the whole story. See, that was not in Goodings Grove -- that's a little bit farther to the south and to the west of the Goodings Grove area.

GARRETT: Do you remember anything about Dellwood Park? Did you go there?

MARTIN: Yes -- Dellwood Park. Dellwood Park was built while we were living at the power house in Lemont, and my dad was working for the Chicago and Joliet Electric Railway; and, of course, we were very happy. We used to hear about what they were doing at Dellwood almost every day because Mr. Blackhalland and many of these people who were connected with the building of Dellwood Park would come on up to Lemont many times. As soon

as it was opened, Mr. Blackhalland used to give us kids tickets so that we could get on the streetcar and go down to Dellwood Park and spend the day and everything was free for the Austin kids. So we enjoyed Dellwood Park a great deal. It was opened in -- was it along 1907, about that time -- and they moved away in 1910, but we enjoyed it while we were in Lemont.

GARRETT: What was in the park -- just swings like there is now?

MARTIN: Oh, it was much bigger, and an amusement park at that time. They had, of course, the scenic railway which was the big thing as far as we kids were concerned.

GARRETT: Just like a roller coaster?

MARTIN: Yes, something like that -- only I don't think it was as dangerous as some of the roller coasters that they have now. Of course, I don't think any of the smaller children -- I don't think we ever went on it alone. Maybe we did-- maybe my brother and I did. I don't remember. But any way we used to enjoy the scenic railway. And then there was these funny looking glasses and little things that you could look into and see like a movie -- of course -- there were no movies in those days. We used to enjoy looking into those little machines where you could see a movie. I remember those things used to just cost a penny to look into them.

GARRETT: Sounds like an amusement park.

MARTIN: Yes, it was. It was very much an amusement park in the early days. The boat house and the boating -- there was lots of boating on that Dellwood Lake at that time. The boat house was a beautiful thing.

They always had bands, and every Sunday and every picnic day, why they had a band playing there all day long -- and beautiful refreshment stands and ice cream, not pop, but lemonade -- things of that sort.

GARRETT: Sounds nice. Would you consider Goodings Grove wealthy -- you know, how would you consider it as far as income?

MARTIN: Well, I think the farmers all did well. I think that it was a good farming community, because I know that when my dad and my grandfather were running the thresh machine and the corn shellers and those things, I know they were busy a long time and that the crops were big.

GARRETT: How much money would you say your family earned?

MARTIN: Oh, I don't know. I don't have any idea how to -- I just never have thought of it in that way.

GARRETT: I was just trying to get an idea to compare.

MARTIN: I don't know. I couldn't say. I'm not even a good guesser /Laughter/ of those things.

GARRETT: What was the political issues. . . in Goodings Grove?

MARTIN: Well, I guess we had both Republicans and Democrats out there. I think my folks always had been Republican, but I know that there were many Democrats in the area. Of course, you see, when I was living out there, I didn't think much about that; you know, even in 1918, we couldn't vote -- the women couldn't vote yet. The first that we were allowed to vote was in 1920.

GARRETT: Were you involved in the women's movement?

MARTIN: Well, not too much. I was teaching in the city of Plainfield at the time that we were allowed to vote. Then I was married in 1921. After that I became involved in working for the Republican Party in Ingalls Park.

GARRETT: What kind of officials did they have in Goodings Grove? Did they have a mayor -- was he elected?

MARTIN: No, we didn't have a mayor.

GARRETT: No mayor?

MARTIN: No, no, no. It was just the regular supervisors. My great-great uncle Ira Austin that I spoke about was supervisor for about ten years.

GARRETT: Were they just appointed, or self-appointed, or . . .?

MARTIN: No. I think they were elected.

GARRETT: Elected.

MARTIN: A township election, and my Grandfather Austin was also a supervisor and a constable -- and, oh, both my grandfathers, Austin and Mitchell, were directors of the school* but outside of that it was just a regular part of the Will County system of government and the supervisors would meet here in Joliet then. (*In those days, school directors held office similar to our present school board members. Many schools had three directors)

GARRETT: I see. So there was just one supervisor?

MARTIN: It's still that way to this day. I think Barney Welter is one of the supervisors for the Homer Township at the present time.

GARRETT: And he was elected?

MARTIN: Yes. I might have that a little bit wrong, but I think that's about it.

GARRETT: I don't know if you'll remember this or not, but were they concerned with national issues and their stand on national issues?

MARTIN: Oh, yes. Of course, I was out there teaching school in 1918 during the war. We did have a pro-German element out there. They hadn't been in America so many years that they had grown away from their idea of Germany; and in a way, you couldn't blame them. It wasn't that I -- maybe at the time we felt a little bit harsher towards them than we would think of it now, because I can see now how it would of been difficult for them to feel otherwise. Of course, I think that if you travel and go to different countries, I think you get over that feeling that it was wrong for them to still feel loyal to their country --'cause I have traveled quite a little bit. In my genealogy work that I do, I have gone to several different countries where my ancestors have come from and the first place I went to was New Zealand. I have cousins living in New Zealand, and I went to visit them. They came and lived with us here and went to the university here and wanted us then to come to their country and visit. We didn't go. We kept thinking that we would go, and then Bob died in 1965, so in 1969 I did go to New Zealand.

GARRETT: Who was the first president that you really remember?

MARTIN: The first president I remember? Well, I think it was Teddy

Roosevelt. We were living in Lemont at the power house when he was running for office, or was elected. My father was quite interested in Teddy Roosevelt, so I think that that was the first president that I remember. In my genealogy work I also went to Scotland and England to look up our ancestors there. The McGregors came from Scotland; my grandmother came from Kinross, Scotland, and Bob's folks were from Scotland, so I visited his cousins when I was there. I went to England where the Austins came from and went to Winchester and some of those areas where the Austins lived.

GARRETT: I've got to ask this: Were there any political scandals -- I know that it seems like now there is a lot of them -- but do you remember anything national or state-wide or just in your little community?

MARTIN: No, I really can't. I can remember hearing and talking about teapot dome, but I can't even remember. . . I believe that. . . it must have been when I was in high school -- some scandal about -- some of them were from Missouri -- some of the politicians that were from Missouri. I can remember them talking about Tammany Hall. I didn't understand what Tammany Hall was either.

GARRETT: In Goodings Grove did they have a regular police department or was everybody on their own good behavior?

MARTIN: I guess so. They just had to be, I guess. /Chuckle/ No, we had no police out there. We had constables. Now I think if anybody got in trouble, I think they were taken before the constable and then the constable would bring them to Joliet. I think that was it. It was something that I hadn't really very much thought about. Of course, even in

1918, when I was teaching out there, I don't think we had as much vandalism or anything. My land! I don't think anybody even locked their doors.

GARRETT: Probably everybody was so close out there.

MARTIN: Unless -- now maybe Mrs. Kesser would lock up at night when I was living at the store, but I bet you anything at my grandmother's house the doors were never locked.

GARRETT: Was there a fire department?

MARTIN: No.

GARRETT: No fire department either?

MARTIN: No, but Homer does have a fire department. I guess in 1918 there was one out there, but if there was a fire, of course, the Homer volunteers -- there was a fire engine there and there was a volunteer group and they were always ready to go. Of course, if it happened during the daytime and the men were in the field, I think they would just leave their work, if there was a fire call. They'd all leave their work and go. That's all there was to it.

GARRETT: Do you remember anything about the canal -- any stories or any workings, or . . .? The I & M Canal?

MARTIN: Well, of course, my grandfather used to talk about it some because he was one of the canal captains. Of course, most of the things that I have learned about the I & M Canal I learned since I have become involved in the Historical Society. Of course, working at the building up there -- it has become quite important to us. I think it was a thing that really helped to open up this part of Illinois. But, of course, the

railroads soon brought an end after the Rock Island and other railroads began operating. I think people could ship easier and quicker by railroad than by the I & M Canal. And then the I & M Canal wasn't large enough that they had to build a drainage canal in order to get a canal that would be large enough to take care of boat transportation.

GARRETT: Your blacksmith -- I know when I watch TV, there's a sort of a stereotype among blacksmiths on the Westerns on TV.

MARTIN: Well, the blacksmith shop was always an important part of Goodings Grove. Mr. Haley was our blacksmith out there for a good many years, and he was a very likeable man. People and everybody all over the country thought lots of Mr. Haley. And, if they didn't have anything to do, that is, if they didn't have any work to bring to him any certain time, why if they wanted to go in and visit while they were waiting at the creamery or waiting at the store or something of that sort, why they were always welcome because Mr. Haley was a very fine man, and he enjoyed people. The blacksmith shop was a popular place. I have a very lovely picture of the blacksmith shop in Mr. Sterling's book -- also Parrish's Store, the post office, and the creamery.

GARRETT: The blacksmith shop in Goodings Grove would be like -- a hang out?

MARTIN: Well, it might be to some extent, but of course, I think the farmers . . . it was closed at night, you see. I think farmers were busy enough that maybe in the wintertime they might have time to sit down and visit with Mr. Haley if he wasn't busy and/or with some of the neighbors. Every once in a while in the wintertime, when the people were bringing their milk to the creamery, they would come to the store and sit around

the stove and spin a few yarns. It was a good chance for them to meet their neighbors and to pass the time of day with some of their neighbors they didn't see every day.

GARRETT: Did they have a saloon or a bar?

MARTIN: No, no. There was no saloon. Only after the Woodman rented the hall for dances, there was liquor sold at the dance hall, but outside of that I don't think there was any place in the area where liquor was sold.

GARRETT: You were still teaching there in the '20's, weren't you?

MARTIN: Yes.

GARRETT: That was during the Prohibition, too. Prohibition started in '21 or '19 -- or somewhere around in there.

MARTIN: Yes. I was married in '21 and I just substituted a while after that.

GARRETT: Were there stills around there that you know or, or any, you know, underworld associations from Chicago around there?

MARTIN: No, I don't think so. If there was, I didn't hear about them at that time. /Laughter/ But I can't even think of any that I might of heard later. No doubt there might have been. /Laughter/

GARRETT: How did the Depression affect Goodings Grove, or was that still as popular then?

MARTIN: Well, I think by the time of the Depression it was no longer a community. It was just a part of Homer Township. By that time it was getting to the point that you didn't know where Goodings Grove was. Even

in the Depression days it was just part of the whole township, Homer Township. They all lived through it. I don't know if many people lost farms as much as maybe people that had money in banks.

GARRETT: There was no banks, I take it?

MARTIN: No. The closest banks that we had there was either Lockport or Joliet or Lemont.

GARRETT: It wasn't a popular thing, then, to use banks?

MARTIN: Well, yes, I suppose. I can think back now. People used to years ago borrow money from each other instead of coming to a bank and borrowing money. Up at the Historical Society there are a lot of notes and I found notes that people borrowed money from my grandfather because he was running the threshing machine. And from my father, because they would have cash on hand that these people could borrow. I never realized that until I worked at the Historical Society how much of that was done in the days of my father and grandfather in the country, that they borrowed from each other instead of coming to a bank and borrowing money.

GARRETT: Did they have interest rates or anything?

MARTIN: Yes, they would always tell you what interest they were paying.

GARRETT: From each other, you mean, they borrowed at an interest rate?

MARTIN: It was always that you'd find that the notes had been canceled and that the notes had been paid up.

GARRETT: Well, I can't think of anything else. Is there anything you

would like to add to any of this -- some great detail that I have missed, or . . .?

MARTIN: /Laughter/ No, I don't know. I know that I've always been interested in history. As you know, family history has intrigued me for a good many years, and I just helped with this book from Canada entitled William Van Horne. He was a son of C. C. Van Horne, first mayor of Joliet and built the western part of the Canadian-Pacific Railroad over the Rocky Mountains. We're trying to get some copies of that so that we'll have some copies of the book in Joliet. C. C. Van Horne was my great-great grandfather. I suppose that is one of the reasons why I have always been interested in history. Our family has been connected with history so I guess that's natural that I should be interested in it, and I liked to teach history when I was in school. But at that time, I hadn't even looked into family history. I didn't start to do that until about 1935. I knew that C. C. Van Horne was my great-great grandfather, and I knew about Sir William and some of those things but it didn't interest me at that time. It wasn't until after I was married and had little kids at home and then I began to write and think about genealogy.

GARRETT: In your schools, when you were teaching, you said that there was 35 kids going there. Was that various ages?

MARTIN: Yes. We had all grades and both years that I taught at Goodings Grove, I had pupils in eighth grade.

GARRETT: So that would be from first through eighth?

MARTIN: Through eighth grade.

GARRETT: And after eighth grade they would have to come up to Joliet to go to high school?

MARTIN: It was Lockport.

GARRETT: Oh, Lockport. I see now. How did one teacher teach first through eighth grade?

MARTIN: Well, you know it was a big job and especially when you had graduates. Most of the time we followed a very close schedule. Well, of classes and study periods. Giving small children worthwhile projects and activities during class time for older groups was a big problem. Following a Course of Study, instead of having any one certain regular school textbook for the different subjects was difficult for the teacher. Many books needed to be used to follow the outline in the Course of Study. When the eighth grade pupils came to Joliet to take their examination for graduation, it was a very important day for both pupils and teacher. The examinations were given by the State and sometimes a question would be asked that the teacher never dreamed of it coming under the subjects given in the Course of Study. You just had no idea what they were going to ask those kids when they got to Joliet.

GARRETT: You were trying to teach one kid how to read and the other one was so far ahead and they're all in the same room.

MARTIN: The first year I was at Goodings Grove, I had four graduates and we even had school on Saturday mornings for just the eighth grade. Many Saturday mornings I didn't come to Joliet -- I stayed out there because those kids had to graduate. /Laughter/ The 1920 school year I taught seventh grade in Plainfield. It was so much easier -- it was so much less

worry.

GARRETT: Well, is there anything else? I don't have anything else to ask you that I can think of right now.

MARTIN: Well, I can't think of anything else about Goodings Grove only that I'll always have a warm spot in my heart for Goodings Grove -- not just because I was born there and many ancestors lived there, but also for the many friends I made when I went back to teach in the community.

GARRETT: Okay. I guess we'll wind this up then. Thanks a lot. I've enjoyed interviewing you.

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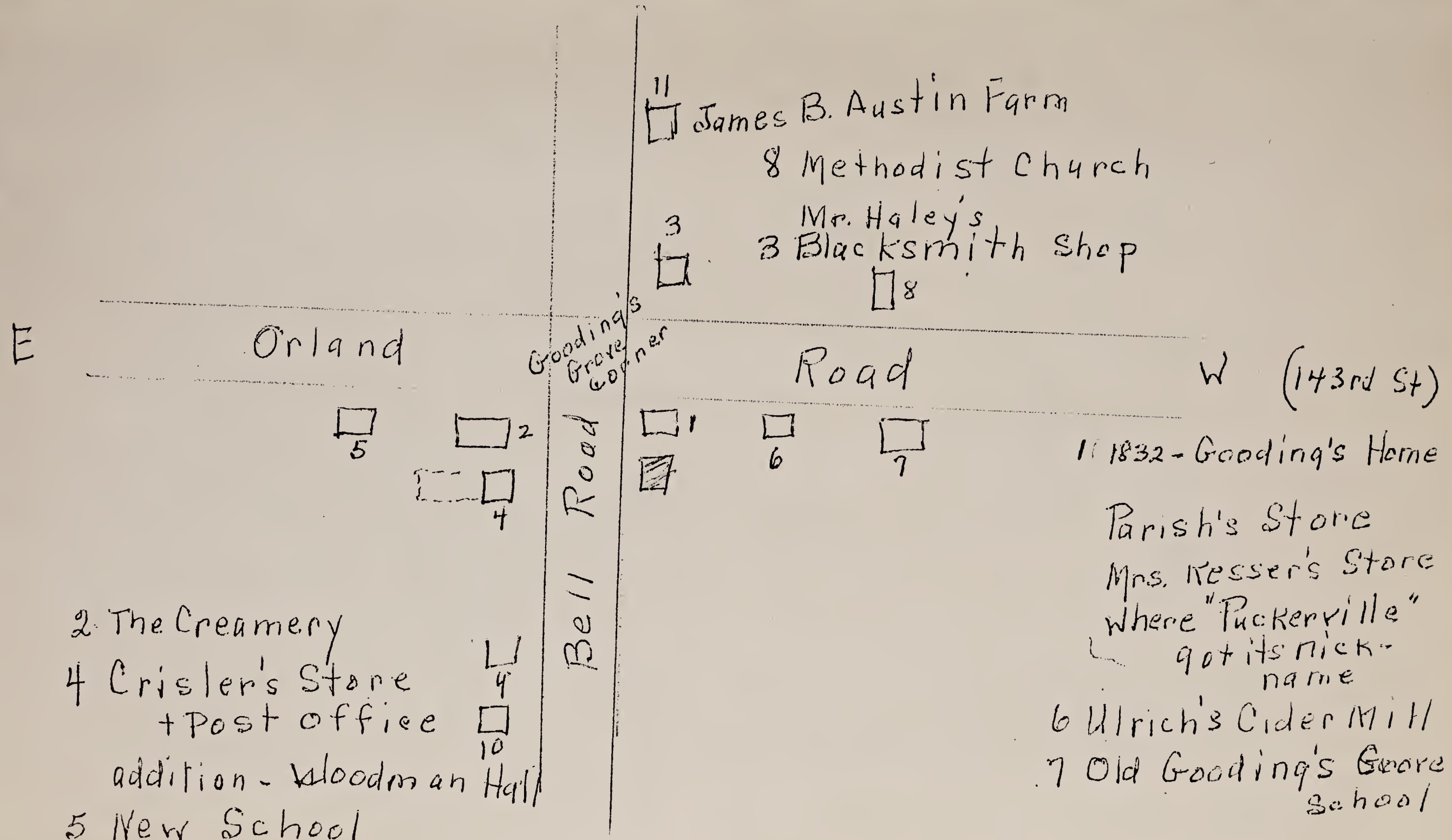

2 The Creamery

4 Crisler's Store
+ Post office
addition - Woodman Hall

5 New School

9 Ira Austin Home
Property to Gooding Grove Corner

10 Mitchell Home
where I was born

1 1832 - Gooding's Home

Parish's Store
Mrs. Kesser's Store
Where "Puckerville" got its nick-name

6 Ulrich's Cider Mill

7 Old Gooding's Grove School

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